EXCISE

3-13-52

Egypt

TOP SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1952 MAR 17 PM 4 13

ANALYSIS OF THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SITUATION

I. BACKGROUND

1. British forces in varying numbers have been in Egypt since the occupation of that country in 1882. From 1882 to 1936, the legal status of those forces, the reasons for their presence and the area of occupation have undergone various modifications.

2. In 1936, Egypt and the United Kingdom signed a Treaty of Alliance with a view to "consolidating their friendship, their cordial understanding and their good relations". The British were authorized to maintain 10,000 land forces and 400 pilots with ancillary personnel to "ensure in cooperation with the Egyptian forces the defense of the Canal" which is "an essential means of communication between the different parts of the British Empire". The Treaty was signed during the period of international tension created by the Italian aggression against Ethiopia.

3. The 1936 Treaty provides for revision in 1956 through mutual agreement or arbitration. It does not provide for its termination unilaterally.

4. British forces presently in the Canal Zone are there by virtue of the 1936 Treaty.

5. For the past 70 years, Egypt has demanded the evacuation of British forces, although in the face of immediate danger (such as the Italian campaign in Ethiopia) it was prepared to compromise. Since the end of World War II, Egypt's demands for evacuation have become more insistent and have produced violent popular reactions. All proposals made by the British have been rejected; the 1946 proposal because of the Sudan. Each British proposal has been slightly less generous with respect to withdrawal than the previous one, but this has been due to the increased East-West tensions -- viz: 1946 -- total evacuation in three years; April 1951 -- phased evacuation of ground troops over a five-year period, except anti-aircraft personnel and joint air defense which would remain after 1956; October 1951 -- evacuation of those troops over and above the number allocated to the Middle East Command in agreement with the Egyptian Government (no number specified but it was considered that it could be no more than the maximum allowed under the 1936 Treaty).

6. In October 1951, the Egyptian Government decided it could not achieve anything by negotiation and abrogated the 1936 Treaty. This action led to guerrilla attacks against the British bases, the 100% walkout of Egyptian labor at the bases, refusal of dock workers at Port Said and Suez to service British vessels, increased difficulties with respect to obtaining food, water, etc., for British bases. The popular reaction to abrogation culminated in the near-revolutionary riots in Cairo on January 26. While order has been restored for the time being, insistence on British evacuation stands.

No Egyptian

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No Egyptian political leader could now accept less than evacuation. Any agreement involving the stationing of non-Egyptian forces in Egypt would probably not endure very long.

7. Notwithstanding (1) the increase of British troop strength between the period October 1951 and March 1952 from about 30,000 to over 60,000; (2) provision of naval personnel to keep ships moving through the Canal; and (3) replacement of Egyptian labor with some foreign labor, the base has operated at progressively reduced efficiency and "cannot be considered a satisfactory operative base". Factors contributing to this situation include (1) labor supply; (2) supply problem, e.g., fresh goods; (3) fresh water problem, including vulnerability sweet water canal and filtration plants to sabotage; (4) communications facilities in the basis of the Egyptians; (5) dependence on Egyptian railways, transportation; (6) vulnerability of repairs, maintenance and storage facilities to raids, sabotage, etc. It appears that the British military have now come to the conclusion that in order to maintain a fully operating base ready for immediate wartime use, it is necessary to have Egyptian cooperation and assistance.

8. The Sudan problem is a complicating factor in Middle East efforts to settle the base question. The Sudan and the defense [illegible] are inextricably linked in the minds of the Egyptians; and Egypt will [illegible] on a simultaneous settlement of both.

9. The Egyptian stake in the Sudan is water, historical ties and prestige. The British stake is moral position, pride of accomplishment and strategic. The Sudanese stake is the maintenance of the Sudan as an entity and a growing nationalism there opposes both British and Egyptian "Imperialism".

II. UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES IN EGYPT

1. The United States considers it militarily important that strategic facilities in Egypt be maintained in peacetime in such condition that they could be effectively and speedily used in the event of imminent threat to the security of the Middle East. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have indicated that the stripping of the base of qualified operating personnel to the point where the base is no longer operative; i.e., reduced militarily to caretaker status, would not be acceptable.

2. The United States as the third largest user of the Canal has a direct interest in the free and unimpeded use of the Canal by Western powers during peacetime and wartime. It is assumed that the uninterrupted use of the Canal during peacetime is as important militarily (i.e., supplies for Indo-China, Korea, etc. now move through the Canal) as it is politically and economically.

3. The United States

9. The United States desires the full and voluntary cooperation of Egypt with the Western powers in preparing to defend, and in defending, the Middle East as a whole against Soviet aggression.

THE DEFENSE QUESTION

I. NECESSITY FOR NON-EGYPTIAN FORCES IN EGYPT

1. Under optimum conditions it would be desirable to retain at least some non-Egyptian forces in the Canal Zone base permanently (1) to maintain the base in full operating condition for immediate use in wartime; (2) to ensure the free and uninterrupted use of the Canal if Egypt should endeavor to close it; and (3) to provide striking strength against initial Soviet aggression in the Middle East.

2. While it would be desirable to station non-Egyptian forces in the base in numbers sufficient to carry out the above tasks, the British do not consider that it is absolutely necessary to maintain combat troops in the Canal Zone and have on several occasions offered to withdraw them. They have insisted, however, on maintaining adequate personnel, civilians if necessary, to operate the base, and on a joint air-defense scheme. From the United States military point of view the most important requirement is the maintenance of the base in full operating condition for immediate use in wartime.

3. The question of maintaining non-Egyptian forces in the Canal Zone to keep the Canal open has arisen only as a by-product of the incidents following the abrogation of the 1936 Treaty. British thinking with respect to possible evacuation of British forces from the Canal Zone bases does not appear, however, to have been affected by concern that the Egyptians might irresponsibly endeavor to close the Canal.

II. WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES OF MAINTAINING NON-EGYPTIAN FORCES IN EGYPT?

1. 1936 Treaty. While the present British position in Egypt derives from the 1936 Treaty, the continuation of that position in the face of unilateral Egyptian abrogation has produced an explosive situation in which (1) the base is no longer fully operative; (2) large numbers of British troops are tied up (Churchill made this point to the Congress); and (3) Egyptian cooperation with the West is at an all-time low. While the British could continue their military position for some time, it could not be for an indefinite period without outside help and in any event that position would frustrate the achievement of the first and third of the United States objectives (page 2, i.e. maintenance of strategic facilities and Egyptian cooperation). In addition, the continued use of force to maintain a

position

position in the Canal Zone would be likely to (a) bring heavy United Kingdom pressure on the United States to provide token forces (Churchill has already asked for these); (b) place the United States squarely in the "imperialist" camp as far as the Egyptians and other Arabs are concerned; (c) destroy the "new deal" cooperative approach of the Middle East Command; and (d) provide the Communists with a ready-made situation of popular Egyptian frustration which has already been exploited to a dangerous degree. B-1 EB ED

2. Middle East Command. Since Egypt and the United Kingdom had so far not been able to reach agreement on a bilateral basis and appeared to be drifting even further apart, the United States hoped that a multilateral arrangement would remove the stigma of "British" occupation and that Egypt would agree to the stationing under multi-lateral aegis of non-Egyptian forces in the Canal base as part of its contribution to the cooperative defense endeavor. The Middle East Command was conceived as a partnership operation involving mutual confidence and faith. Since Egyptian armed forces do not presently possess the capability to maintain the base or protect the Canal, it was considered desirable to station an unspecified number of non-Egyptian, Middle East Command forces in the base. At the outset these forces would have been British but later troops of other Middle East Command powers might have been stationed in the base to give it a multi-national aspect. It was also contemplated that as Egyptian forces were adequately trained, the role of non-Egyptian forces would be reduced. If Egypt had accepted this arrangement in full partnership, the three United States objectives (pages 2-3) would have been achieved.

Egyptian leaders have indicated recently, however, that in peacetime the presence of non-Egyptian forces in Egypt, whether or not under the Middle East Command, would be indistinguishable from what they consider occupation under the 1936 Treaty and therefore unacceptable. At the same time they have indicated that it might be possible to work out arrangements for up to several thousand foreign technicians to maintain the base and to train Egyptians.

It would appear that if the price of admission to the Middle East Command is agreement to the presence in Egypt of non-Egyptian forces (except technicians), Egypt will not pay it.

3. Technicians. While Egypt has remained adamant with respect to the evacuation of British forces, it has made a distinction between forces and technicians. Both the Government under Nahas Pasha and the present government have indicated that if evacuation is accepted, an agreement can be worked out to permit a limited number of technicians to remain in the base to maintain it and to train Egyptian personnel. No number has been specified but the British in April 1951 proposed 3500 civilians. It might well be that Egypt would not object to military technicians provided they were under Egyptian command.

4. Conclusion

4. Conclusion. Since continuation by force of the 1936 Treaty position for any length of time would be costly and prejudicial to Western interests, and since Egypt probably will not participate in or associate itself with the Middle East Command if non-Egyptian forces are to be stationed in Egypt in peacetime, the only alternative course appears to be (1) acceptance of early evacuation of non-Egyptian forces; (2) an agreement with Egypt to permit foreign technicians to maintain the base and to train Egyptians; and (3) an Egyptian commitment to participate in or associate itself with the Middle East Command.

III. AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT INVOLVING EVACUATION

It is understood that the British contemplate that they might eventually have to accede to evacuation of all their troops (except technicians) from the base. [redacted] g-1 EB ED Since the United States military point of view is that this area is one of British military responsibility, it is unlikely that the United States would oppose this decision on military grounds. In previous instances when the Joint Chiefs of Staff have been consulted on the problem of the Canal Zone base, they have been reluctant to comment on British requirements. In this connection General Bradley wrote on August 29, 1951: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that it would be unsound and inappropriate for them to attempt an estimate relative to British requirements for specific numbers of armed forces for facilities in Egypt".

However, assuming that the United States did oppose evacuation on the grounds that evacuation under Egyptian pressure would not be in keeping with the role of the Great Powers and would weaken their position of strength in the Middle East, the problem would still remain as to whether the British would be able to operate an effective base and would be able to maintain themselves in Egypt indefinitely.

If it is concluded that the British could do neither of these things unilaterally, then a determination would have to be made as to whether they could do it with assistance from the United States or others.

If it is concluded (as seems likely) that United States participation would not change the basic fact that Egyptian cooperation and assistance is necessary to maintain a fully operating base ready for immediate wartime use, then it appears that opposition to evacuation and United States involvement in the Canal Zone would not only frustrate two of the United States objectives (page 2) but would create a strong hostility against the United States in the Middle East.

If we acquiesce in British evacuation, what are the risks involved?

1. Abrogation of the new agreement. This is always possible, but if the new agreement is based on the one demand Egypt has always made — evacuation.

evacuation of foreign troops -- it seems unlikely that there would be ground for abrogation. Moreover, any agreement is subject to the risk of denunciation, legally or otherwise.

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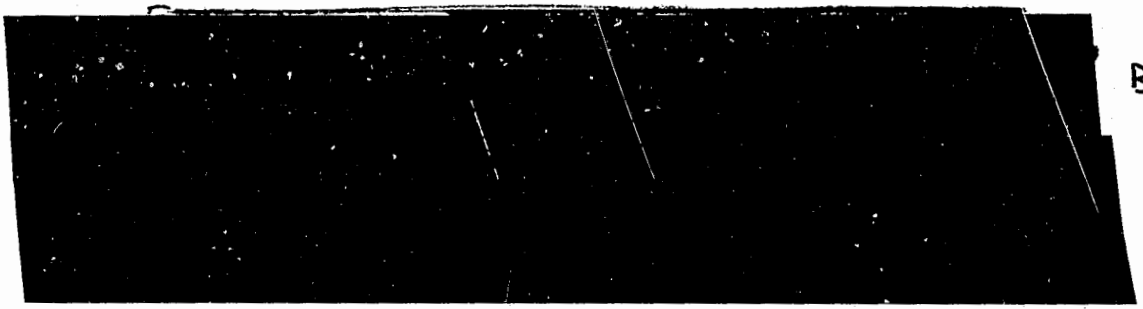

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3. Maintenance of the base. If agreement can be reached regarding technicians and Egyptian participation in or association with MEC, there should be few complications in keeping the base up to minimum standard. In addition, Egyptian labor, without which it is apparently not possible to operate the base, would return to work.

4. Uninterrupted use of the Canal. Egyptian action with respect to Israel may be cited as evidence that the use of the Canal would be subject to Egyptian whim if non-Egyptian forces left the base. However, if the causes of present tension are removed, and Western cooperation with Egypt is achieved through MEC, the possibility of such [redacted] action would be minimized. In any event, Egypt is well aware of the great importance which the West attaches to uninterrupted use of the Canal and understands that if it attempted to close the Canal to the United Kingdom or any other Western Power, prompt international action, probably involving the use of force, would be the result. Such action would be likely to have the support if not cooperation from the principal users of the Canal, including the United States.

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It would be hoped that the problem of Canal restrictions against Israel would disappear within the framework of Anglo-Egyptian settlement.

5. Non-Availability of troops for intra-area disputes. Under MEC non-Egyptian forces in the base could not have been used for this purpose. Consequently, the presence or absence of non-Egyptian forces in the base does not bear on this problem. The British had planned under MEC to maintain other than MEC forces in the area but not in the Canal Zone.

6. Protection of Western Nationals. If present tensions which have caused incidents such as January 26 are removed, there is little reason to suppose that any special measures for the protection of Western nationals in Egypt will be required.

7. Middle East Command. It is possible, though not probable, that Egypt would refuse to participate in or associate itself with MEC, even if it were agreed that non-Egyptian forces would not be stationed in the base. On the other hand, it is certain that Egypt will have nothing to do with the Middle East Command if non-Egyptian forces are stationed in the base. Egyptian participation in or association with MEC on a voluntary basis (which is basic in the MEC concept) is much more likely as the result of withdrawal of non-Egyptian forces.

In any event, non-Egyptian forces remaining in the base could not be MEC forces, nor could the base be an MEC base if Egypt were not willing to participate in or associate itself with MEC while non-Egyptian forces were in Egypt.

Provided MEC is defined as something which would include Egypt.

THE SUDAN

The Sudan question is more difficult to resolve than the defense issue, since a third element -- the Sudanese people -- is involved and must be taken fully into account. The three points of view -- the UK, Egyptian and Sudanese -- are at variance and so far it has not been possible to find a formula which will give satisfaction to them all.

The main issues are sovereignty and water.

I. SOVEREIGNTY

1. Egypt claims that its sovereignty over the Sudan dates from the conquest of that country in 1821 by Mohammed Ali, then Ruler of Egypt under the Sultan of Turkey, and that it should be accepted and recognized by the UK and other Western powers. Although Egyptian rule over the Sudan was in abeyance during the Mahdi revolt which started in 1882, Egyptian authority was restored in 1898 by a Joint Anglo-Egyptian Army under General Kitchener. Egypt asserts that the 1899 agreements providing for Joint Anglo-Egyptian administration of the Sudan in no way affected its sovereignty.

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While the King of Egypt has never used the title "King of the Sudan" until the decree of October 16, 1951, he has used the title "Sovereign of Nubia, the Sudan, Darfur and Kordofan". In addition, King Farouk has stated that he and his forefathers have always considered themselves Kings of the Sudan. The following evidence would appear to support the Egyptian contentions: (1) Mohammed Ali's conquest of the Sudan was never challenged until the Mahdi revolt of 1882; (2) following the occupation of the Sudan, the Ottoman Sultan granted to the ruler of Egypt the government of Nubia, Darfur, Kordofan and Sennar (provinces of the Sudan) and by the Firman of May 27, 1866 addressed to the Khedive of Egypt, Ismail Pasha, decided that the hereditary right to "the government of Egypt with the dependencies (in the Sudan) which are annexed thereto" was to be "transferred (at his death) to the eldest of your house and ... to the eldest born of your successors". King Farouk is the grandson of Ismail; (3) at the time of the Fashoda incident during the Anglo-Egyptian campaign in 1896 the British argued strongly against French attempts to occupy parts of the Sudan on the grounds that Egyptian sovereignty over the Sudan had never been abandoned during the Mahdi revolt but had only been dormant; (4) the 1899 agreements referred only to the administration of the Sudan and the preamble itself begins "Considering certain provinces in the Sudan which were in rebellion against the authority of His Highness, the Khedive, have now been reconquered..."; (5) the Governor General of the Sudan is appointed by the King of Egypt on the recommendation of the British Government; (6) in 1915 the British Law Officers of the Crown gave it as their opinion that reference to the existence of a symbolic dynastic union between Egypt and the Sudan was fully justified.

While Egypt has been willing to permit the Sudanese to enjoy an autonomous status under the common crown of Egypt, it had never been willing prior to November 1951 to concede the right of the Sudanese to self-determination, including the possible choice of full independence. On November 16, 1951 the then Foreign Minister of Egypt, in a speech before the United Nations General Assembly, indicated that Egypt would agree to self-determination by the Sudanese through means of a plebiscite provided that British officials evacuated the Sudan. It is believed that the principle of self-determination is still recognized by the present Egyptian Government.

The Egyptian position with respect to recognition of the title and the principle of self-determination is clear, but there is considerable doubt as to their intention with regard to participation in the administration of the Sudan during the period between recognition of the title and the exercise of self-determination by the Sudanese. There are indications that Egypt will expect substance in addition to the title, and will also try to bring about a permanent union. However, there is no definite information to suggest that the Egyptians have really thought out their role in the Sudan following recognition.

2. The British

2. The British, for their part, do not contest the validity of the Egyptian claim to sovereignty. However, they assert that since the King of Egypt has never used the title "King of the Sudan", there is no valid reason for insisting on its use now. The British maintain, moreover, that recognition of the title at this time would constitute a change in the status of the Sudan and that they could not agree to this change of status without full consultation with the Sudanese people. Successive British Governments have given pledges through statements in the House of Commons that the welfare of the Sudanese people is a sacred trust and that they would only permit a change in the constitutional status if the Sudanese themselves agreed.

British rights in the Sudan were acquired through participation in the Anglo-Egyptian campaign against the Mahdi and the preamble of the 1899 agreement states "whereas it is desired to give effect to the claims which have accrued to HBM, by right of conquest, to share in the present settlement and future working and development of the said system of administration and legislation...". Until 1924 the administration of the Sudan was on a joint basis, but since that time it has been almost exclusively a British administration. The British take justifiable pride in the political and economic development of the country.

Because of (1) the moral position which the British have with respect to the Sudan, (2) the number of British who have served in the Sudan, and their accomplishments, and (3) the possible strategic use of the area, the Sudan has become a particularly sensitive point in British domestic politics. There is strong resistance in Parliament to anything which would suggest a deal between the United Kingdom and Egypt at the expense of the Sudan. The Sudan Government is at present proceeding rapidly with a program of self-government and self-determination and there will be strong opposition to any attempts to delay or subvert it. The British will also strongly oppose any attempts to change the present system of administration.

3. The Sudanese are divided among themselves regarding their future political status. The Independence Front which is cooperating with the present administration considers that the acceptance of the King of Egypt's title as King of the Sudan would be a predetermination of the Sudan's future. The Union-with-Egypt Front, on the other hand, believes that the Sudan and Egypt must be linked through the Crown, with the Sudan retaining an autonomous status. The Southern Sudan, a backward primitive area, fears both independence and the Egyptian Crown at an early date, but would probably not oppose either if there were adequate safeguards to protect the rights of the South.

There is a growing Sudanese nationalism which must be taken into account. All Sudanese desire that the Sudan should remain an entity and

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that it should not be integrated with any other country. Both British and Egyptian imperialism would be opposed. The most difficult exercise for the Sudanese will be self-determination. At present only the Independence Front and the South participate in elections and unless the Union-With-Egypt Front participated, self-determination would have little meaning. The participation of the latter depends on Egypt.

II. WATER

1. The distribution of the Nile Waters is presently controlled by the Nile Waters Agreement of 1929. This agreement provides that during the timely season, i.e., when the Nile is low, 98% of the Nile waters will be distributed in Egypt and 2% in the Sudan. Egypt claims that the Sudan does not use the full 2%, while the Sudan Government claims that requests for irrigation schemes and pumps cannot be filled because of the lack of water. Attempts to construct storage facilities at Lake Tana in Ethiopia to provide additional water for the timely season have been frustrated because the United Kingdom and Egypt cannot agree on how the negotiations with Ethiopia will be handled and apparently Ethiopia is not willing to accept the signature of the Sudan Government alone. Egypt attaches particular importance to the problem of the Nile Waters and there is popular belief that if the Sudan were not under Egyptian control, the Nile would be shut off. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the Sudanese either can or would attempt to deprive Egypt of its share of the Nile Waters.

2. In view of the disagreement with respect to the sharing of the waters, it is believed that only a neutral commission could decide the facts of the case and that any future Waters Agreement should have an international guarantee similar to the Tripartite Declaration of May 1950.

III. UNITED STATES POSITION REGARDING THE SUDAN.

The United States has never been directly involved in the Sudan problem and has always maintained that it is a matter for settlement between the three parties concerned. However, the United States has come to recognize that the Sudan and the defense question are inextricably linked in the minds of the Egyptians and that the settle the defense question, some solution of the Sudan problem is also necessary.

In view of the importance which Egypt attaches to the acceptance of the title "King of the Sudan", it is believed that the West should accept or recognize this title. At the same time, the right of the Sudanese to full and early self-determination should be fully protected.

We should also oppose attempts by the Egyptians to upset the general pattern of the present administration. If the British insist on consultation

before

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before acceptance of the title, there are adequate means to conduct such consultation and it is not necessary, as the British suggest, to await the election of a Constituent Assembly for that purpose.

Since the United Kingdom and the Egyptians are mutually suspicious, it may be necessary to form an international commission, possibly composed of Egyptians, British, Sudanese and neutral members, to guide the Sudan towards self-determination. The United States should be ready to participate in such a commission if it will assist in promoting a settlement.

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